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21 April 1958

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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Next 1 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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DAILY BRIEF

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

No
Pervukhin to Moscow: Soviet Ambassador to East Germany Pervukhin has been suddenly summoned to Moscow probably to be briefed on First Deputy Premier Mikoyan's forthcoming visit to West Germany from 25 to 28 April. Pervukhin is scheduled to return to Berlin on 24 or 25 April. There is a possibility, however, that Pervukhin's recall is connected with recent vituperative press attacks against the "antiparty group." Pervukhin was reduced to alternate Presidium status last June when the "antiparty" big three were purged. [redacted]

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Yugoslav-bloc relations: The expected Sino-Soviet bloc boycott of the Yugoslav party congress has been confirmed by Belgrade. The Soviet attack on the Yugoslav party program was cast in terms of an ideological schism between the Yugoslav party and the entire socialist camp. The Yugoslavs are unlikely to make concessions on their basic ideological position, which would place them once again in ideological isolation from the bloc. [redacted]

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Next 8 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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The Arab Union and Kuwait

The Ruler of Kuwait has rejected a British suggestion that his oil-rich sheikhdom join the Arab Union recently formed by Iraq and Jordan. He fears that such a move would provoke trouble among the majority of Kuwaitis, who are strongly pro-Nasir, and would provide an opportunity for the United Arab Republic to undermine him. Kuwait's population, which includes a significant number of Palestinian Arabs, is especially hostile to the Nuri Said "absolutist" regime in Iraq, while the Kuwaiti ruling clan has traditionally feared Iraqi territorial designs on Kuwait.

Kuwait's great wealth has been regarded by the Arab Union leaders as a means by which they could compensate for the weakness of the Jordanian economy.

Since Kuwait's rejection of the Arab Union bid, Iraqi Foreign Minister Jamali has asked the United States and Great Britain to urge Lebanese leaders to adhere to the union on the grounds that Lebanon's membership would strengthen the union and stabilize the Lebanese internal situation. To add such an inflammatory issue to the existing controversy in Lebanon over President Chamoun's ambition to legalize another term for himself probably would touch off more widespread strife there.

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21 Apr 58 CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN Page 5

25X1A

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Kishi Decides on May Elections

Japanese Prime Minister Kishi and leaders of the ruling Liberal-Democratic party have decided to dissolve the lower house of the Diet about 25 April and hold national elections on 22 May. The elections will be the first popular test for Kishi and of his policy of close co-operation with the United States.

Most political observers believe the Socialists, who hold approximately one third of the 467 seats in the powerful lower house, will make some gains. If the Socialists gain as many as 15 or 20 seats, this would erode Kishi's control of the government and of his conservative party, result in renewed factionalism among the conservatives, and force the prime minister into a stronger stand against the US on some issues, notably Okinawa, and into closer relations with the Communist bloc.

In large part, Kishi's control of the conservatives may be determined prior to elections when he attempts to limit the number of conservative candidates in Japan's system of multi-seat districts. His failure to achieve this objective probably would split the conservative vote and allow the Socialists to win additional seats.

Although Kishi has failed to develop into a popular figure, he has a record of considerable achievement in office, and he may believe that his government's handling of the controversial private trade agreement with Communist China, the fishery talks with the USSR, and the negotiations with South Korea, have created a favorable election climate for the conservatives at this time. Final solutions of these problems have not been reached, however, and adverse developments prior to 22 May could strongly influence the voters. [redacted]

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III. THE WEST

Iceland Threatens Drastic Action on Territorial Limits Issue

Anti-American and neutralist sentiment may heighten in Iceland as a result of the US position taken at the Geneva conference on the law of the sea. The United States has proposed that territorial waters be extended to six miles, with fishing rights in a six-mile strip beyond largely reserved to the littoral state. Iceland, whose economy is entirely dependent on fish, desires a 12-mile limit with the possibility of further extension in special circumstances.

The foreign minister has vigorously protested to the United States Embassy that the public is so inflamed that incalculable harm may be done to Icelandic-American relations and to Iceland's attitude towards NATO. He also stated that in the event the outcome of the conference is unsatisfactory Iceland would extend its territorial waters to the 12-mile limit and would attempt to enforce it.

The US Embassy confirms the gravity of public reaction, citing press emphasis on the US "stab in the back" theme. Under the stress of emotion the chauvinistic Icelanders are capable of interfering with the smooth functioning of the US-manned NATO airbase at Keflavik and blocking further cooperation in defense matters. They might even reopen negotiations, discontinued in December 1956, on the withdrawal of US forces. The Icelandic delegate at Geneva has on several occasions told the American delegate that unless Iceland's problem got sympathetic consideration, the United States "would not be able to keep a single soldier or maintain the NATO base on Iceland."

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21 Apr 58 CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN Page 7

25X1A

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Mikoyan Visit to West Germany

The Foreign Ministry in Bonn appears apprehensive lest Soviet First Deputy Premier Mikoyan use his 25-28 April visit to influence West German public opinion on controversial East-West issues. Mikoyan, who in the past has proved an effective spokesman on foreign as well as economic policy, probably will make a vigorous bid to increase German popular support for the USSR's pre-summit campaign and for continued bilateral negotiations on outstanding Soviet-German differences. He will play up the dangers of Bonn's rearming with nuclear weapons and endorse the Socialist thesis that basic German-Soviet differences can be resolved by reasonable discussion.

Mikoyan's trip will coincide with the West German Social Democratic campaign against "atomic death" and may help the Socialist appeal against Bonn's decision to equip the German army with nuclear weapons.

The West German Foreign Ministry is trying to circumvent Mikoyan's activities by arranging a crowded schedule of visits to industrial plants, museums, theaters, and universities. The government has rejected a Soviet request for an extensive, free-wheeling tour which would include Communist strongholds in north German port and industrial areas, in favor of a trip through central and southern Germany to Stuttgart, via Frankfurt and Heidelberg, where feeling on the nuclear issue is probably less intense. [redacted]

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Soviet Journal Comments Favorably on de Gaulle

A long article in the Soviet journal Literary Gazette, describing the current governmental crisis in France, declares: "Many cannot but be attracted by the fact that de Gaulle stands for a more independent foreign political course, for a sober approach to colonial problems."

The French Communists publicly oppose de Gaulle's return to power, avowedly on the grounds that he would demand broad powers at the expense of the Assembly. Privately the party may hope that de Gaulle's assumption would strengthen the prospects for Communist-Socialist cooperation as well as furthering Soviet foreign policy objectives.

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Soviet diplomats in Paris have been saying privately that France needs a stronger regime which would act more independently of NATO. Although it must act cautiously to avoid accusations of interfering in French affairs, the USSR may use both public and private channels in coming months to try to persuade the French that a more independent foreign policy, perhaps under de Gaulle, would be more advantageous to France than sole reliance on its existing alliances.

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